DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 962 UD 035 965

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TITLE	Economic and Racial Segregation in Greater Miami's Elementary Schools: Trends Shaping Metropolitan Growth.
SPONS AGENCY	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.
PUB DATE	2003-08-00
NOTE	14p.; Produced by Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.
AVAILABLE FROM	Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-2188 (Free). Tel: 202-797-6000; Fax: 202-797-6004. For full text: http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/publications/200308_Orfield.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available From EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Black Students; Elementary Education; Hispanic American Students; *Minority Group Children; *Population Trends; *Poverty; *Racial Composition; Racial Segregation; *Social Change; *Socioeconomic Status; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Miami Dade County Public Schools FL

ABSTRACT

This report highlights the social changes underway in Miami-area schools, discussing their implications for metropolitan growth policies. It focuses on changes in the racial and economic composition of elementary schools between 1993-2002. Data come from the Common Core of Data of the National Center for Education Statistics. Results indicate that the elementary school student population in the Miami metropolitan area is growing rapidly, but the growth is very unbalanced. The region's two school districts became poorer over this period, and the degree of income segregation worsened. As the region's schools became more diverse, racial segregation eased slightly but remained severe. The region's most dramatic social changes are taking place in the suburbs, which often must address growing need with dwindling fiscal resources. The paper notes that the concentration of poor and minority students in a particular school can fuel the flight of middle class families from the surrounding neighborhood. These changes contribute to a cycle of sprawl and disinvestment from existing communities. To help reverse some of these patterns, the paper recommends that state and local leaders explore reforms in land use, taxes, and regional governance. (SM)

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